

# *Documents on Diplomacy: Resources*

## *Soviet Reaction to the Baghdad Pact*

*Statement by U.S.S.R. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 16, 1955*

The situation in the Near and Middle East has recently become considerably more tense. The explanation of this is that certain western powers have been making new attempts to draw the countries of the Near and Middle East into the military groupings which are being set up as appendages to the aggressive North Atlantic bloc. . . .

It is not difficult to see that, lying at the basis of the policy of setting up military groupings in the Near and Middle East—just as in the establishment of the aggressive military grouping in South-East Asia (the so-called SEATO)—is the desire of certain western powers for the colonial enslavement of these countries. The western powers wish to carry on exploiting the people of the countries of the Near and Middle East so as to enrich their big monopolies which are making greedy use of the natural wealth of these countries. Unable to establish and preserve their domination by the old methods, these powers are trying to involve the countries of the Near and Middle East in aggressive blocs, on the false pretext that this is in the interests of the defence of the countries of this area.

Military blocs in the Near and Middle East are needed, not by the countries of that area, but by those aggressive American circles which are trying to establish domination there. They are also needed by those British circles which, by means of these blocs, are trying to retain and restore their shaken positions, in spite of the vital interests of the peoples of the Near and Middle East who have taken the road of independent national development. . . .

As has frequently happened in the past, now, too, efforts are being made to cloak the aggressive nature of the Near and Middle Eastern plans of the United States and Britain with ridiculous fabrications about a "Soviet menace" to the countries of that area. Such inventions have nothing in common with reality, for it is a matter of record that the underlying

basis of the Soviet Union's foreign policy is an unalterable desire to ensure peace among the peoples, a peace founded on observance of the principles of equality, non-interference in domestic affairs, and respect for national independence and state sovereignty.

From the very first days of its existence, the Soviet state has decisively condemned the policy of imperialist usurpations and colonial oppression; and it annulled all the unequal treaties which the tsarist government had concluded with the countries of the east.

Regarding the national aspirations of the peoples of the east with full understanding and sympathy, the Soviet government was the first to recognise the independence of Afghanistan and helped her to restore her state sovereignty.

The Soviet government cancelled the tsarist government's unequal treaties with Iran, and transferred to her great material wealth which Russia owned in Iran.

During the years of Turkey's hard struggle for national independence, the Soviet Union stretched out the hand of friendship and gave her all-round assistance—a fact which played a decisive part in the struggle of the Turkish people against the foreign interventionists.

The Soviet government was the first to recognise Saudi Arabia as an independent state and supported the struggle for state independence of the Yemen, Syria and Lebanon, and Egypt's rightful demands for the withdrawal of foreign troops from her territory.

In international bodies, the Soviet government always supports the legitimate demands of the countries of the Near and Middle East aimed at strengthening their national independence and state sovereignty.

The Soviet Union has unswervingly pursued, and continues to pursue a policy of peace and the easing of international tension. Proof of this, in particular, can be seen in its proposal to end

the arms drive; to prohibit atomic and hydrogen weapons; for an immediate and substantial reduction of armaments and, first and foremost, of the armaments of the five great powers; and for the establishment of a system of collective security in Europe. . . .

Of course, the Soviet Union cannot remain indifferent to the situation arising in the region of the Near and Middle East, since the formation of these blocs and the establishment of foreign military bases on the territory of the countries of the Near and Middle East have a direct bearing on the security of the U.S.S.R. This attitude of the Soviet government should be all the more understandable since the U.S.S.R. is situated very close to these countries—something which cannot be said of other foreign powers, for instance, of the United States, which is thousands of kilometers from this area.

The refusal of the countries of the Near and Middle East to take part in aggressive military blocs would be an important prerequisite to the ensuring of their security, and the best guarantee of these countries not being drawn into dangerous military adventures.

Striving for the development of peaceful cooperation among all countries, the Soviet government is prepared to support and develop cooperation with the countries of the Near and Middle East, in the interests of strengthening peace in this area. In its declaration of February 9, 1955, the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics declared that it considered it of exceedingly great importance that relations among countries, large and small, should be based on those international principles which would facilitate the development of friendly cooperation among the nations, in conditions of a peaceful and tranquil life.

The Soviet Union believes that relations among states, and real security can be ensured

on the basis of the practical application of the well-known principles enumerated in that declaration—namely: equality; non-interference in domestic affairs; non-aggression and the renunciation of encroachment on the territorial integrity of other states; and on respect for sovereignty and national independence.

The government of the Soviet Union would support any steps by the countries of the Near and Middle East towards putting these principles into practice in the relations between them and the Soviet Union, towards strengthening the national independence of these countries and consolidating peace and friendly cooperation among the peoples.

If the policy of pressure and threats with regard to the countries of the Near and Middle East is continued, the question should be examined by the United Nations Organization.

Upholding the cause of peace, the Soviet government will defend the freedom and independence of the countries of the Near and Middle East and will oppose interference in their domestic affairs.

*Source:*

From the *Soviet News*, No. 3146 (April 19, 1955), pp 1-2, as reproduced at:

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